

**Economic Development Commission
215 Bay Street, Easton, MD 21601
Talbot County, Maryland**

June 6, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Ted Bautz, Walter Chase, Peter Dunbar, John General, Susie Hayward, Paul Makosky, Gerald O'Mara, Geoff Oxnam, also Paige Bethke

Members Excused: Ann Borders and Leonard Wendowski

Members Absent:

Ex Officio Members Present: Shannon Dill, Cassandra Vanhooser, Mike Henry, Corey Pack Art Reeside and Barbara Viniar.

Guest Speaker: Cassandra Vanhooser

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m. by Chairman, Walter Chase, at the County Offices located at 215 Bay Street in the Large Conference Room.

Agenda and Minutes: The Agenda for the June 6, 2013 ED Commission Meeting was approved without changes. The April 4th and May 2nd meeting minutes were approved. The ED Commission approved a letter be sent to FAA supporting the continued funding of the Control Towers past the September 2013.

Guest Speaker: Cassandra Vanhooser, Director, Talbot County Office of Tourism, provided an overview of her goals in managing as the new Tourism Director including work with the Tourism Board to develop a strategic five-year plan to increase tourism activity. She is also managing an update for the county tourism website, as well as mobile apps and printed brochures to better direct visitors to and around Talbot County. The Tourism Office hosted representatives from the UK Tour Operators and a French Tourism delegation who were most interested in St Michaels as an example of small town Americana. Foreign tourists are guided by Capital Region USA (CRUSA) tour operators who provide an authentic experience for the international tourist. A popular tour includes New York City, Washington DC and loop through St Michaels. Geoff Oxnam, Easton Utilities Representative, reported that Easton Utilities designs and produces apps and online website management and expressed interest in working with the Tourism Office as they expand their current capabilities. The Commission welcomed and thanked Cassandra for her overview.

Correspondence to Commission: A letter was sent to Geoff Oxnam, Vice President, Business Development, Easton Utilities, reappointing him to a three-year term on the Talbot County Economic Development Commission. One vacancy remains due to Mark Ensor's resignation.

Old Business: Paige Bethke reported the Economic Development Office budget for FY 14 was approved by the County Council and provides for a full time Administrative Assistant, in addition to marketing funds. A marketing plan will be presented to the ED at the August Commission Meeting. Priorities include website updates with links to social media, a marketing

campaign and branding effort for Talbot County and identification of a business's recruitment strategy for the towns.

Also under Old Business, additional correspondence with our Congressional Delegation has been requested by Mike Henry, Easton Airport Manager, as Easton Airport continues to be in jeopardy for losing FAA funding to operate the Control Tower.

New Business:

Final Presentation of the "Economic Development Strategy Plan for Talbot County and the Towns- an Opportunity for Alignment" will be presented to the County Council and Towns, June 25th, 2013 @ 6 pm at the Quarterly Work Session with County Council. Town representatives are invited to attend. Upon approval, the Program of Work will be acted upon for implementation.

The ED Commission reviewed and approved their six month meeting schedule for July thru December, 2013 as follows: July 4th Thursday (no meeting); August 1 (Bay St.); September 5 (Hidden Gem, Trappe); October 3 (Key Lime Café, St. Michaels); November 7 (Oxford Community Center, Oxford); December 5th (Easton Diner, Easton). Meetings begin at 8 a.m..

Standing Sub Committees:

Strategic Planning: Ted Bautz, Chairman, reported the Strategic Plan Subcommittee has received and reviewed the Strategic Plan final document as completed by Sage Policy Group. The recommendations were delivered by Anirban Basu to the County Council and Towns on Tuesday, April 23rd as part of the County's regularly scheduled Agenda. The Recommendations were then reviewed with the County council and each of the Towns to develop a Program of Work for implementation of the Strategic Plan. The Program of Work will be presented for adoption by the Council at the June 25th Quarterly Work Session.

Chairman's Report: Chairman, Walter Chase, reported Trappe residents' expressed issues regarding medical emergencies and proximity to medical facilities and requested a meeting with Shore Regional health to discuss the impact of the proposed Regional Medical Center and transport from Trappe. Two pizza parlors opened in Trappe, totaling five places to dine out.

Director's Report: Copies of Director's report provided to commission members and included updates of business visits, expansion and retention projects and participation in events. **Member Activity Reports:** **Corey Pack, Ex-Officio**, encouraged publicity regarding the attraction for tourists and residents as well as the importance of retaining commercial businesses for the future economic health of Talbot County.

Susie Hayward, Member at Large, reported agency had third best month ever.

Real Estate Report for May 2013:

	Listed	Sale
Talbot County	689	64
Easton	325	33
Trappe	49	5
Oxford	50	5
St. Michaels	92	7
Tilghman	47	2

Geoff Oxnam, Utilities, reported extension of fiber infrastructure with Broadband connection; replacing aging infrastructure; actively working with students and interns. Invited commission members to volunteer as instructors for Achievement Counts, as well as advise others in the community to volunteer. **Gerald O'Mara, Agriculture**, asked Cassandra Vanhooser, Tourism, to speak to farm groups. **Shannon Dill, Ex-Officio**, reported most of the corn was planted in Talbot County; a lot of replanting had been required due to a cold and wet spring. Planting of soybeans was half way completed and the wheat and barley were to be harvested soon. Shannon invited the ED Commission to attend the County AG Tour on June 22nd. **Pete Dunbar, Oxford Commission**, reported a very successful Oxford Day on Saturday, April 27th with a large turnout. The Cooperative Oxford Lab held their open house on this day as well. Many Oxford homes have been reassessed with a 5% and 7% increase in value. **Barbara Viniar, Ex-Officio**, Chesapeake College is experiencing adjustments as new legislation has changed the rules regarding billing and charging for students enrolling in the Community College. **Ted Bautz, Vice Chairman**, reported commercial real estate is experiencing slow absorption in Easton and that retail seems to be steady. Mr. Go-Glass had an opportunity to leave Easton but chose a new location on Route 50 and relocated as a retention project with improved space, better rates and better visibility for marketing. Received notice from brokers of 17,000 SF of Industrial space available on Glebe Park Road. **Mike Henry, Ex Officio**, reported the Communications Tower at Easton Airport has been funded by the FAA through September and thanked the Commission for the support and letters that were sent. He then requested another letter be sent from each of the Commission members to the Congressional Delegation to extend funding for the Control Tower beyond the September FY 13 funding cycle. The motion was approved. Trident has moved into hanger space at the Airport and will be running operations out of Easton Airport; projecting \$50,000 in fuel use; ten employees, twenty six air craft with eight based at Easton and an opportunity for further development. There is also interest from a helicopter pilot to take the old Med Star facility, built for helicopters. The website is being well managed. The Sugar Buns Café was required to remove their sign on Route 50; a new sign was installed over a 35 year existing sign and now has to come down according to SHA. Airport Day is scheduled for September 28th and will partner with Habitat for Humanity/Paramedics as recipients of any proceeds. Sanswire has vacated their temporary hanger space at the Airport and moved to Texas. **Mayor Willey** reported that the Easton Town Commission agreed to establish an Economic Development Corporation. The Executive Management has been appointed and the By Laws are being developed. **Paul Makosky, Member at Large**, -no report. Commented the Chesapeake Chamber Music Festival had been well received and attendance was up from last year. The Two week festival attracts participants from around the country and several foreign countries. **Scott Warner, Ex Officio**, reported that the Rural Maryland Council has announced its two day Rural Assembly for October 17 and 18 and will be partnering with the Rural Health Association and hosting the event in Aberdeen. **Art Reeside, Ex Officio**, attending for Terenda Thomas, reported the Talbot County unemployment rate for May 2013 was 7.1% down from the April report of 8.7%. The state of Maryland is reporting a 6.4% unemployment rate. There were 700 jobs available in Talbot County in May. He is beginning to visit companies in the five county area as the DLLR Representative. **Michael Dugan, Ex Officio**, reported Chesapeake College is offering a HVAC program at the MEBA School. **The Meeting adjourned at 9:15 am.**